



News Release

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Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH confirmed as Secretary of Health

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Senate voted to confirm Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH as Secretary of Health on Friday, April 23. The vote follows Secretary Shah’s testimony before the Senate Committee on Health & Long Term Care in a confirmation hearing on March 10, and the committee’s subsequent recommendation of his confirmation to the full Senate.

Gov. Inslee [appointed](#) Secretary Shah to lead the Department of Health (DOH) in December 2020. Since then, Secretary Shah has been responsible for the state’s COVID-19 response and vaccination efforts. Under his leadership, over 40% of the state’s population has received at least one dose of vaccine and two million people have been fully vaccinated. As of this week, providers in the state have given five million doses of vaccine, and more than 250,000 doses have been administered at the four mass vaccination sites run by the state. The state is currently averaging around 60,000 doses given per day, with some days reaching as many as 90,000 doses.

Secretary Shah has infused his focus on equity, innovation and engagement into the state’s vaccination plans. As part of the state’s [strategies for equitable vaccine distribution](#), DOH has listened to and implemented feedback from the communities most impacted by COVID-19. DOH has made continuous improvements to ensure equitable access at state-led mass vaccination sites, including a recent hours extension based on feedback from community leaders.

Secretary Shah has also championed innovative efforts like the Vaccine Command and Coordination System (VACCS) Center, a unique public-private partnership responsible for [launching an improved Vaccine Locator tool](#) that has helped two million users quickly and easily search for vaccine appointments.

Since Secretary Shah began his position, DOH has steadily improved transparency around vaccination data, launching a new [dashboard](#) tab to help people understand where and when vaccinations are being given, how many people are getting vaccinated and the demographic makeup of the vaccinated population. DOH continues to update the dashboard with new metrics regularly.

“I am proud of what our state has achieved in the past four months. We are making incredible strides on vaccination, equity, public-private collaboration and more,” said Secretary Shah. “We are so close to turning the corner on the pandemic and there is a bright future ahead of us if we keep working together. We can do so much to improve public health across our state in the COVID-19 response and beyond, and I look forward to tackling those challenges.”

More information on Secretary Shah’s background and education can be found in his [biography](#). For the latest updates from the Secretary’s office, visit [@WAHealthSec](#) on Twitter.

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